



Montgomery County Council

From the Office of Councilmember Steve Silverman

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SILVERMAN UNVEILS NEW PROPOSAL FOR BOOSTING "WORKFORCE HOUSING" IN COUNTY

Councilmember Steve Silverman, who chairs the Council's Planning, Housing & Economic Development Committee, today unveiled a bold new proposal to significantly boost the availability of affordable "workforce" housing in the County for middle class and working families.

His legislation, which will be introduced tomorrow, mandates that 10% of market rate housing in areas near Metro stations must be workforce housing -- housing affordable to people between 80-120% area median income. Area median income for a family of 4 is about \$89,000; for a two-person family it is approximately \$71,000. Using conservative assumptions, a family of 4 could afford to pay about \$300,000 for housing and a family of 2 could afford to pay a little less than \$250,000.

"I believe in a very simple proposition," said Silverman. "People who work in Montgomery County ought to have a better shot at living in Montgomery County. The proposal is intended to apply in our higher density areas near Metro stations. It will provide a way for two teachers, or two nurses, for example, to be able to afford a condo or townhouse in these 'Smart Growth' areas where the bulk of our future new development will occur. Just as most families start with smaller housing, they will be able to build some equity and then in future years move up to a larger home, either in our urban areas or in single family detached neighborhoods."

"We need to move ahead," said Councilmember Nancy Floreen, a co-sponsor of the legislation. "We want our children and we want our workforce to be able to live in this County, not have to live further and further out. This proposal isn't a panacea but it is another tool to boost affordable housing."

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Silverman and Floreen were joined at today's news conference by Montgomery County Education Association president Bonnie Cullison, Russ Louch of Action in Montgomery, and Robert Jepson, Associate Vice President of Adventist Health Care.

The new requirement on developers will apply to subdivisions of 35 or more units for a control period of 10 years for sale and 99 years for rental. Zones to be covered are those in Metro station policy areas with a density of 40 dwelling units per acre or greater.

As an example, an apartment or condo building that has 87 market rate units, and 13 Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (assuming the minimum 12.5% MPDU requirement is provided), would also be required to build 8 workforce housing units (10% of the market rate units) for a total of 108 units in the building.

A developer will not receive any bonus market rate units along with the workforce housing. However, except for the new zone which will apply to properties near the Shady Grove Metro, the density limits of the zone can be exceeded in proportion to the number of workforce housing units constructed, but no more than a 10% increase in any limits on the number of dwelling units or FAR limit. The zones' height limits cannot be exceeded, although for CBD zones which have two potential height limits, the higher one would be the maximum. Both standard method and optional method require workforce housing.

For the new zone for most of the properties near the Shady Grove Metro, workforce housing only applies to optional method, but the height and density limits in this zone (which are established in the sector plan) may not be exceeded to provide the workforce housing.

A public hearing on the proposal is scheduled for the evening of November 22.

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